

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 03078 01 OF 02 281602Z

44

ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /090 W

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R 281016Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 581

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

CINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 3078

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, UR, US

SUBJECT: KOSTKO AND MIL'SHTEYN ON MBFR

REF: MBFR VIENNA 0064

1. SUMMARY - IN A CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 23 YURIJ KOSTKO, AN EXPERT
ON EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES AT MOSCOW'S INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMY
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IMEMO), CHARACTERIZED THE WARSAW

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 03078 01 OF 02 281602Z

PACT REPLY TO NATO'S NUCLEAR OFFER AS ONE OF "ESSENTIAL ACCEPTANCE."

HE SAID THAT THE NATO NUCLEAR OFFER HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT ONE, AND SAID THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES WERE NOT CLOSER THAN EVER BEFORE. HE SAID THAT THE WARSAW PACT WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS WITH NATO ITS LATEST OFFER, AND INDICATED THAT NON-LINEAR TRADE-OFFS OF WARSAW PACT EQUIPMENT FOR WESTERN DELIVERY SYSTEMS MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. GENERAL M.A. MIL'SHTEYN, HEAD OF THE USA INSTITUTE'S MILITARY AFFAIRS SECTION, MADE SOME OF THE SAME POINTS IN A CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 27, CALLING THE LATEST WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL A BARGAINING MOVE WHICH THE EAST DID NOT EXPECT THE WEST TO ACCEPT AS OFFERED, BUT ONE WHICH WOULD MOVE BOTH SIDES TOWARD REAL GIVE-AND-TAKE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. MIL'SHTEYN ALSO HAD SOME SUGGESTIONS ON ASYMMETRICAL EQUIPMENT REDUCTIONS, AND KOSTKO OFFERED SOME THOUGHTS ON THE SALT/MBFR CONNECTION. END SUMMARY

2. EMBOFF FEBRUARY 23 CALLED ON KOSTKO ON APPOINTMENT MADE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. CONVERSATION IMMEDIATELY TURNED TO MBFR AND THE NATO NUCLEAR PROPOSAL. KOSTKO ASKED WHAT EMBOFF THOUGHT OF THE WARSAW PACT ANSWER TO THE OPTION 111 PROPOSAL WHICH HAD BEEN TABLED ON FEBRUARY 20. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT THOUGH HE KNEW FROM PRESS REPORTS THAT SUCH AN ANSWER HAD BEEN TABLED, HE DID NOT YET HAVE A REPORT FROM VIENNA ON THE DETAILS (REFTEL RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO CONVERSATION). EMBOFF CONTINUED THAT HE HAD NOTICED THAT SOVIET MEDIA HAD BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO REJECT OUTRIGHT THE NATO PROPOSAL, AND ASSUMED THAT THE OFFICIAL REPLY HAD FOLLOWED MUCH THE SAME LINES. KOSTKO ANSWERED THAT THE WARSAW PACT HAD "NOT ONLY NOT REJECTED IT, THEY HAD ACCEPTED IT." HE CONTINUED THAT WHILE HE HIMSELF DID NOT YET KNOW "EXACTLY WHAT HAD BEEN LAID ON THE TABLE", HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE WARSAW PACT "IN ESSENCE" ACCEPTED AND EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS WITH NATO WHAT STEP IT COULD TAKE OF COMPARABLE VALUE.

3. KOSTKO CONTINUED THAT THE EAST HAD NOT ACCEPTED ALL OF THE WESTERN CONDITIONS -- "A COMMON CEILINGS AND SO FORTH"--BUT IT HAD REALIZED THAT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT ONE, AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. HE SAID THAT WHILE OUR POSITIONS STILL DO NOT COINCIDE ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION OF WHICH

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 03078 01 OF 02 281602Z

APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS IS THE PROPER ONE, THEY NEVERTHELESS ARE MUCH CLOSER NOW THAN AT ANY TIME EARLIER. BOTH SIDES, HE SAID, ARE NOW IN AGREEMENT THAT REDUCTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE GROUND FORCES, "AIR FORCES, AND UNITS EQUIPPED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS -- OR AT LEAST IN THE LATTER TWO YOU ARE WILLING TO REDUCE EQUIPMENT".

4. KOSTKO SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT THE WESTERN

OFFER TO REDUCE NUCLEAR LAUNCHERS WAS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT. HE SAID THAT THE WARSAW PACT BELIEVED THAT THE "SIMPLEST WAY TO REPLY" WOULD BE TO REDUCE ITS OWN LAUNCHERS BY THE SAME AMOUNT; ANY OTHER APPROACH WOULD MAKE NECESSARY AGREEMENT ON THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF "COEFFICIENTS OF COMPARABILITY"; I.E., HOW MANY TANKS WAS A NUCLEAR LAUNCHER WORTH. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER HIS STATEMENTS INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS TO ESTABLISH SUCH "COEFFICIENTS", KOSTKO ANSWERED THAT MIGHT BE A NECESSARY SOLUTION. BUT HE EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT AT THIS POINT TO SEE WHETHER DISCUSSIONS OF THAT NATURE WOULD BE NECESSARY. HE INVITED EMBOFF TO MAKE A RETURN CALL ON HIM "AROUND MAY 1", AT WHICH TIME, HE AID, "WE WOULD BOTH HAVE A BETTER FEEL FOR HOW THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL DEVELOP".

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 03078 02 OF 02 281321Z

44

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 582

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

CINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 3078

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

5. GENERAL MIL'SHTEYN, IN A CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 27, ALSO ASKED US FOR OUR REACTION TO THE NEW WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL. WE SAID THAT WE DID NOT FEEL THAT A PROPOSAL FOR MIRROR-IMAGE REDUCTIONS ON TANKS AND NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS WOULD DO MUCH TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. MIL'SHTEYN COUNTERED WITH A QUESTION ON WHETHER WE HAD EXPECTED THE EAST TO ACCEPT OUR NUCLEAR PROPOSAL EXACTLY AS IT WAS OFFERED. WE ADMITTED THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN PERHAPS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. HE SAID THAT IN THE SAME WAY, THE EAST DOES NOT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 03078 02 OF 02 281321Z

REALLY EXPECT THE WEST TO ACCEPT ITS LATEST OFFER, AND THE WEST SHOULD SEE IT AS A BARGAINING MOVE WHICH IS OPEN TO DISCUSSION AND MODIFICATION.

6. MIL'SHTEYN ASKED US WHAT WE FOUND SO OBJECTIONABLE IN THE NEW EASTERN OFFER. WE SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO ITS FAILURE TO MEET OUR CONCERNS ON ASYMMETRIC TROOP CUTS, IT ALSO ASKS US TO CUT TANKS -- CLEARLY, WE EXPLAINED, POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE AND MILITARILY UNWARRANTED. HE ASKED HOW WE WOULD SUGGEST TO REMEDY THIS. WE SAID THAT IN GENERAL TERMS THE EAST SHOULD AGREE TO TANK REDUCTIONS (AS WELL AS ASYMMETRIC TROOP CUTS) TO OFFSET THE DELIVERY SYSTEMS WE HAD OFFERED. HE REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE SOVIET UNION TO AGREE TO CUT ITS TANKS IF THE US DID NOT REPLY IN KIND; HE ADDED THAT THE NUMBERS MIGHT NOT HAVE TO BE SIMILAR, BUT THE US WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO AT LEAST SOME TANK CUTS -- "399 TP 100 OR 1700 TO 400."

7. MIL'SHTEYN SPOKE OPTIMISTICALLY ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR AN MBFR AGREEMENT, AND EMPHASIZED THAT BREZHNEV'S PARTY CONGRESS SPEECH HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE SOVIET UNION EXPECTED THE NEGOTIATIONS TO CONTINUE FOR A GOOD MANY YEARS "AFTER ANY INITIAL AGREEMENT." WE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT WESTERN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE TALKS WAS NOT AS FIRM AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CASE EARLIER, AND SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL HAVE TO SHOW INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR WESTERN CONCERNS IF THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO MOVE FORWARD BEFORE THAT SUPPORT WEAKENS EVEN FURTHER. MIL'SHTEYN REPLIED THAT THE TWO NEGOTIATING TEAMS IN VIENNA MAY PERHAPS NOW BE BEGINNING TO CARRY ON A DIALOGUE WITH EACH OTHER, AND THINGS MAY MOVE FASTER NOW.

8. IN THE EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH KOSTKO EMBOFF CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO A RECENT ARTICLE IN IZVESTIYA BY A WEST GERMAN COMMUNIST WRITER WHO HAD SAID THAT "THE WAY TO (THE CSCE REVIEW

CONFERENCE IN) BELGRADE LIES THROUGH (THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IN) VIENNA", AND ASKED IF HE COULD AGREE WITH SUCH A TIMETABLE (I.E., COMPLETION OF MBFR BY JUNE 1977). KOSTKO REPLIED THAT THE TIME REMAINING BEFORE BELGRADE WOULD BE ENTIRELY SUFFICIENT FOR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN MBFR, PERHAPS INCLUDING AT LEAST SOME SORT OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. HE ADDED THAT PERHAPS A SYMBOLIC STEP COULD BE TAKEN WHICH WOULD IMPROVE THE NEGOTIATING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 03078 02 OF 02 281321Z

ATMOSPHERE AND WHICH AT THE SAME TIME WOULD BE A CONCRETE STEP FORWARD.

9. EMBOFF ALSO ASKED WHAT KOSTKO'S VIEW WAS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SALT AND MBFR. HE REPLIED THAT AS FAR AS THE SOVIET UNION WAS CONCERNED, THERE IS NO OFFICIAL TIE, BUT THAT CERTAIN "CONNECTION FACTORS" COULD NOT BE IGNORED. FIRSTLY, HE SAID, SOME OF THE ISSUES BEING DISCUSSED IN SALT -- ESPECIALLY CRUISE MISSILES AND BACKFIRE -- CARRY OVER INTO THE TACTICAL ARENA, AND IF WE CAN DETERMINE HOW THEY ARE TO BE HANDLED IN THE ONE SET OF NEGOTIATIONS IT WILL BE EASIER TO HANDLE THEM IN THE SECOND. SECONDLY, THERE IS THE UNDOUBTED PSYCHOLOGICAL/POLITICAL IMPACT OF EITHER SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN SALT ON THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. KOSTKO ADDED THAT HE SOMETIMES HAD THE FEELING THAT THE SECRETARY, "WHO LOVES TO USE SUCH LEVERS", HAD DECIDED TO LINK THE TWO SETS OF NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE SOVIET UNION. EMBOFF DISABUSED HIM OF THIS NOTION, EXPLAINING THAT WE SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS AS SEPARATE, THOUGH LINKED "PSYCHOLOGICALLY", AS KOSTKO HIMSELF HAD PUT IT. IN A PART-ING COMMENT KOSTKO POINTED OUT THE VERIFICATION DIFFICULTIES POSED BY CRUISE MISSILES BOTH ON THE STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL LEVEL, AND WARNED THAT THE SIMPLEST SOLUTION IS TO BAN THEIR DEPLOYMENT ENTIRELY.

10. COMMENT- KOSTKO'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE WARSAW PACT OFFER AS "ESSENTIAL ACCEPTANCE" OF OUR NUCLEAR POSPOSAL IS OF COURSE AN OVERSTATEMENT. BUT BOTH KOSTKO AND MIL'SHTEYN CLEARLY BELIEVE THAT OUR NUCLEAR PROPOSAL HAS MOVED THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. MIL'SHTEYN'S ADMISSION THAT THE NEW WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL IS A BARGAINING MANEUVER OPEN TO DISCUSSION AND MODIFICATION WAS UNAMBIGUOUS; KOSTKO'S SOMEWHAT LESS SO BUT STILL CLEAR ENOUGH. BOTH ALSO APPARENTLY SEE NON-LINEAR TRADE-OFFS OF AT LEAST EQUIPMENT AS DESTINED TO PLAY A ROLE IN FUTURE BARGAINING, PERHAPS TAKING THE FORM OF THEIR TANKS FOR OUR NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS. WE THINK THAT MIL'SHTEYN'S DISCUSSION OF ASYMMETRIC TANK CUTS WAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. NEITHER OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS, HOWEVER, WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS ASYMMETRIC TROOP CUTS IN ANY FORM.

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 03078 02 OF 02 281321Z

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